

December 15, 2022

Subject: Regional Climate Collaboratives Program: Round 1 Award Recommendations
Reporting Period: April - December 2022
Staff Lead: Ena Lupine, Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program Manager

Recommended Action

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE) Staff recommend the Council award \$8,350,000 from the FY 2021-2022 General Fund for Round 1 of the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program and \$196,294 from the FY 2022-2023 General Fund for RCC Round 2 to the six (6) top-scoring proposals, for a total of \$8,546,294.

Summary

This Staff Report provides an overview of the first round of the California Strategic Growth Council's RCC Program, including a summary of the Program Guidelines development process, Application process, and CACE staff award recommendations.

The RCC Round 1 NOFA made \$8.35 million available for 4-16 grants ranging from \$500,000 - \$1.75 million. Round 1 of the RCC program was significantly oversubscribed, receiving eighty-six (86) pre-proposals and forty-five (45) full applications. Of the forty-three (43) full applications that met threshold requirements, CACE staff recommend six (6) for award at this time. Grantees will complete grant terms of three (3) years.

Background

About the RCC Program

The Regional Climate Collaboratives Program (RCC), established by SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018), invests in community-led capacity building to help under-resourced communities access statewide public and other grant moneys for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. RCC enables community-rooted and cross-sectoral partners to deepen their relationships and develop the processes, plans, and projects that will drive and sustain climate action. The goal of the program is to strengthen local coordination, leadership, knowledge, skills, and expertise with a particular focus on increasing access to funding resources for project planning and implementation within under-resourced communities. The program objectives are to build social infrastructure, develop equity-centered processes, develop actionable plans and projects, and center community engagement and decision making in pursuing and implementing funding. The RCC program is particularly timely as the State and Federal Government has made historic funding available to address climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. The oversubscription to this first round of the program demonstrates an awareness across nearly every region in California of the need for this level of capacity building support and the demand for funding that engages communities further upstream.

RCC funds collaboratives of cross-sectoral partners to implement capacity building strategies to align community needs and priorities with funding opportunities. This program aims to establish lasting local structures and systems that can inform and advance equitable climate action within the State's most under-resourced communities. RCC is a competitive grant program that funds collaboratives to serve communities within a project area ranging from one to eight counties with a requirement to serve a minimum of two under-resourced census tracts¹.

Guidelines Development Process

The Round 1 Guidelines were developed through a robust public engagement process. Before drafting any content, program staff hosted a series of listening sessions, focus groups, and key informant interviews in fall 2021. Staff then developed and released the Draft FY 22-23 RCC Guidelines in February 2022 for a 35-day public comment period. During that time, staff held a series of five public workshops to receive feedback on the Guidelines. Over 400 individuals, representing community-based organizations and nonprofits, Tribes, philanthropy, local and regional government, academic institutions, and small businesses, engaged in the guideline development process. Please see the [RCC Guideline Development Engagement Summary](#) for more details.

In addition to this external engagement, SGC convened an interagency work group comprised of state partners to support guidelines development. The work group collectively possessed expertise related to capacity building, climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, and environmental justice and equity, across various sectors. The work group provided feedback iteratively and helped promote public engagement opportunities amongst their stakeholder networks.

Background on the Application Process

Pre-Proposals

SGC received a total of 86 pre-proposals from 56 of California's 58 Counties. Majority of the Pre-Proposals received were from the Bay Area (20), Southern California (18), and San Joaquin Valley (17). A total of 17 tribal Pre-Proposals were submitted, six of which were Tribal led and eleven included tribes or tribal-serving organizations as partners. The Pre-Proposals included representation of over 400 organizations, representing community-based organizations and nonprofits, foundations, academic institutions, local and regional governments, Tribes, and private enterprises.

CACE Staff and Technical Assistance (TA) providers reviewed Pre-Proposals and provided feedback to applicants on the components of their application that did and did not meet program threshold requirements. Ultimately, 60 of the 86 pre-proposals were connected to TA providers for assistance developing their full application. The remaining 26 pre-proposals did not demonstrate readiness to apply

¹ A community identified pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code, subdivision (d) of Section 39713 of the Health and Safety Code, or subdivision (g) of Section 75005. Includes: Census tracts identified as 'disadvantaged' by the California Environmental Protection Agency ; or census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code; or census tracts with a median household income less than 80% of the statewide average

to Round 1 of RCC and were encouraged to seek TA and capacity building support for Round 2, or connected to other funding opportunities that were more aligned with their projects.

Application Technical Assistance

SGC offered third-party application assistance support to RCC applicants through a contract with Estolano Advisors, the Institute for Local Government, the California Coalition for Rural Housing, and Better World Group. Applicants were required to submit a pre-proposal application to receive TA. After reviewing and providing feedback on RCC pre-proposals, SGC connected 60 applicants to their assigned TA providers. The TA providers worked with each applicant to develop a work plan and support applicants on the components of their applications that they prioritized for assistance. The Technical Assistance team will also offer application assistance in Round 2 and will begin engaging with prospective RCC round 2 applicants in early 2023.

Full Application Review

CACE staff carried out a completeness review immediately after receiving RCC applications. Applicants were notified if their application was incomplete and were given two (2) business days to resubmit any incomplete or missing materials. Staff also conducted threshold review at this time, ensuring that applications met the threshold criteria specified in the RCC Program Guidelines. 43 of the 45 submitted applications met threshold review and were advanced to full application review by the interagency panel.

CACE staff assembled a review panel of 33 reviewers from across 11 State agencies and departments to score applications. Reviewers were split into two review groups based on their background and expertise to score technical and administrative scoring criteria or programmatic scoring criteria. Reviewers used the scoring criteria rubric in the RCC Program Guidelines to score applications. Reviewers scored applications individually and attended deliberation sessions to come to a consensus on final scores. The twelve (12) top scoring applications were invited to participate in finalist interviews.

The finalists were invited to participate in interviews with a panel of three to four (3-4) interagency reviewers and CACE staff. Following the interviews, panelists adjusted overall scores based on any additional information that applicants provided during the interviews. The six (6) top-scoring applicants after the interviews are recommended for award.

The 11 State entities represented on the review panel include:

- California Air Resources Board, California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Department of Housing and Communities Development
- California Department of Public Health
- California Department of Transportation
- California Energy Commission
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
- California Governor's Office of Planning and Research

- California Strategic Growth Council

Summary of Applications Received

Full Applications

A total of 300 organizations are represented across the 45 RCC applications received for Round 1 of the program. The types of organizations that participated in RCC applications are listed in Table 1 (below). Four of the 45 applications were Tribal-led, and a total of 13 applications included Tribes or Tribal-serving entities as partners. The applications varied across issue areas, including but not limited to climate adaptation and resiliency, public health, natural and working lands, watershed and forest health, affordable housing, sustainable food systems, workforce development, and youth education and engagement in climate action. Applications came from all regions of the State, covering 42 counties (see Table 2 below). The total amount requested across all the applications was \$66.6 million. The average amount requested was \$1.55 million.

Table 1: Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 1 Applicants by Organization Type

Type of Organization	Total Represented
Tribe or Tribal-Serving Organization	45
Nonprofit	179
Small Business/Private Entity	13
Special District/Joint-Powers Authorities	18
Academic Institution	19
Local Government	19
Other organizations that provide community-based outreach and technical assistance	7

Table 2: Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 1 Applicants by Region

Region	Number of Proposals
North State & Sierra Nevada	7
Capital Region	1
Bay Area	8
San Joaquin Valley	7
Inland SoCal	5
Central Coast	5
Coastal SoCal	11

Recommendations

CACE Staff recommend that the Council approve RCC grant awards to the six (6) top-scoring applications (See Table 3). The recommended awardees represent:

- 7 counties from around the state including the Bay Area, North State, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.
- 2 Tribal-led Collaboratives and a total of 25 Tribal partners
- 58 total organizations represented across the applications

- 20 Nonprofits
- 2 Small Businesses/Private Entities
- 4 Special District/Joint-Powers Authorities
- 4 Academic Institutions
- 3 Local Governments

Table 3: Staff Recommendations for RCC Round 1 Awards

Applicant Name	Managing Stakeholder	Region	Amount Requested
Gateway Cities Regional Climate Collaborative	Gateway Cities Council of Governments	Los Angeles County	\$1,750,000
Siskiyou Climate Collaborative	Siskiyou Economic Development Council	Siskiyou County	\$1,500,000
Southern California Tribal Regional Climate Collaborative	Pala Band of Mission Indians	San Diego, Riverside & San Bernardino Counties	\$1,749,911
San Joaquin Regional Climate Collaborative	San Joaquin Council of Governments	San Joaquin County	\$1,750,000
2030 Resilient Networks Collaborative	Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians	Los Angeles County	\$799,994
Marin Climate Justice Collaborative	Canal Alliance	Marin County	\$996,390

Next Steps

The technical assistance team that supported Round 1 applicants will also be available to support applicants to Round 2 of RCC. This third-party team includes Estolano Advisors, the Institute for Local Government, the California Coalition for Rural Housing, and Better World Group. CACE staff has offered to hold debrief calls with all unsuccessful RCC applicants, in which staff will offer feedback on applications and connect applicants to the technical assistance providers if they are interested in applying to Round 2 of the program. CACE staff plan to release the RCC Round 2 Notice of Funding Availability in Summer 2023.

Council Recommendation

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE) Staff recommend the Council award \$8,350,000 from the FY 2021-2022 General Fund for Round 1 of the Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program and \$196,294 from the FY 2022-2023 General Fund for RCC Round 2 to the six (6) top-scoring proposals, for a total of \$8,546,294.

Should the Council agree with Staff's recommendation, the following motion language is suggested:

"I move that the Council approve Staff's recommendation of awarding the six (6) top-scoring applicants for RCC Round 1 awards."

Attachments

Attachment A: Projects Descriptions for Applications Recommended for Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 1 Funding



Attachment B: Project Descriptions for RCC Round 1 Finalists

Attachment C: RCC Round 1 Full Application Final Scores

